SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER

SAVE THE DATE!

Summer Series
July 30th 6:00-8:30 pm
3120 NE 125th St
Join us at Seattle Mennonite Church for our July Summer Series Event; Poverty, Nutrition, and Change. Stay tuned for details about another Summer Series event at the end of August.

August Hygiene Drive
All month, several local businesses are joining us to provide hygiene necessities for our neighbors.

Open House
August 29th 5-7:00 pm
Join us at our Lake City location for our Open House. See the space, learn about the work, and enjoy food and kid-friendly activities. This is a terrific way to connect with the North Helpline community.

INDEPENDENCE FROM HUNGER

All of July, Grocery Outlet in Lake City is hosting a food and funds called Independence from Hunger. All proceeds benefit North Helpline. Customers are encouraged to donate $5 and receive $5 in coupons, or round up their purchase to the nearest dollar. As of mid-July, Grocery Outlet already raised $1,500. Food donations are also welcome, and we thank everyone who participates in the campaign.

OPEN HOUSE IN LAKE CITY

Join us for this year’s Open House at our Lake City location on August 29th from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. If you have never visited the space, this is a perfect opportunity. We run a tight ship, and there are many facets to our work aside from the warehouse space where the food bank operates. Last year’s open house was quite a success, and this year we hope for the same great turnout from the community. Enjoy food and light refreshments while getting to know your neighbors including volunteers, staff, donors, and partners from community organizations. Every guest at the open house gets a passport, which is a fun way to learn about our offices and warehouse. This year’s Open House will be more kid-friendly than last year! There will be face painting and interactive games.

BITTER LAKE’S 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

This July marks the first anniversary of North Helpline operating the Bitter Lake food bank. In the last year, we doubled food bank hours to be open every week, served more of our neighbors, and increased nutritious options. For the day of the anniversary, we turned the regular food distribution hours into something of a party. We brought popsicles for everyone, and interviewed our volunteers and food bank clients in order to learn more about what the food bank means to them.

“I come to the food bank because I have a family, and I need help to support them. Without food, no one can survive. What the food bank gives us is very helpful for the family. We are very appreciative of everything.”
– Berhane (food bank client)

“The food bank is good for us because we’re elderly and we don’t make that much money. It helps all the people here, and we are glad to have it.”
– Suzanne (volunteer)

“I’ve been coming to the food bank every Saturday, and it’s a big help for me. It saves me money. The food bank gives me lots of food like fruits, vegetables, sometimes there’s fish as well. All of the volunteers here are very nice. I love them.”
– Ella (food bank client)

“I have dietary restrictions because of health issues, and I eat as much organic food as I can. The food bank has a lot of organic vegetables and bread that I can eat... even real organic pastries. I can’t eat anything with chemicals. The food bank saves me money on food I have to buy, in addition to what I get here. I appreciate you a lot.”
– Willa (food bank client)

As neighbors spread the word, the community in Bitter Lake is getting stronger and stronger. One of our great partners Windermere in Greenwood recently volunteered as a team. Many individuals contribute to serving neighbors of the 98133 area. We are grateful for every single person, and we want you to know you are making a difference. From the generous donor who ensured we had enough cold storage to the volunteer who installed the refrigeration units; from the clients who are also volunteers to every single donor, we thank you for supporting our second location in Bitter Lake.

This past spring, we had two special events in Bitter Lake. First, we held an open house at our Bitter Lake location. (continued on next page)
8TH GRADER’S VOLUNTEER PROJECT

Sierra, a student at Seattle Waldorf School, volunteered at North Helpline this spring for her 8th grade project. Sierra’s classmates were not surprised that she picked North Helpline, because she has always enjoyed helping others. She learned all about North Helpline and found a mentor.

Sierra’s mentor was our Food Coordinator Russell, who taught her about food sorting, distribution, and more. Sierra learned quickly and worked diligently. To conclude the project, she gave a presentation to her peers. She emphasized the positive relationships that she saw between volunteers and people who visit North Helpline, not just for food, but also other services. Russell joined Sierra for her presentation, and it was equally meaningful to him to be part of her learning and service. Russell said, “It was heartwarming and really an honor to be invited to Sierra’s presentation. The whole time I had this smile on my face. This will be an experience that Sierra will always remember: to be a part of that, I can’t ask for anything more.”

About volunteering, Russell said, “I told everyone that the food bank would not be able to operate without volunteers. Thanks to people like Sierra, we’re able to distribute food to many people. Young people like Sierra who serve the community give Russell hope. The only thing volunteers receive in return is the warm feeling in their hearts knowing that they have done something good for their neighbors.”

Sierra said her experience was truly meaningful. In addition to learning about how the food bank operates, she had individual interactions with neighbors who visit North Helpline. For example, she helped push full grocery carts from the food bank to the bus stop and our neighbors’ cars. For Sierra, meeting people face to face showed our interconnection.

SUMMER HYGIENE DRIVES

Here at North Helpline, people come to us for more than food. We are a hub of resources, including items that can’t be purchased with food stamps (EBT card). Hygiene items are a basic necessity, and we are grateful for the opportunity to give our neighbors supplies that affirm their dignity and worth. Hygiene supplies are highly requested items.

Personal hygiene is vital, and many of our neighbors unfortunately face significant barriers to self care. Good hygiene promotes health; and it also reduces stigma, particularly for people who are preparing for job interviews. For our neighbors experiencing homelessness, North Helpline is one of the first places they come for help to meet their basic needs.

At Lake City, Ayla is one of our neighbors who comes to the food bank and also receives hygiene items from time to time. She told us how much it means to her to get help with these supplies. Ayla says, “Every three months or so, I get hygiene supplies from you. Things like razors, shampoo, and toothpaste. It really helps, because even at the dollar store, these things get really expensive when you add it all up. And at the regular grocery store, it is twice as expensive. So coming here to North Helpline, it means a lot to me.”

The entire month of August, we are holding summer hygiene drives. In addition to this year’s summer drive hosted by businesses, we are holding hygiene drives at Fred Meyer and at three Safeway stores. In recent months, we have successfully increased our basic needs items thanks to volunteers who have stood outside grocery stores asking shoppers to consider donating hygiene supplies.

If you would like to participate in the summer hygiene drives, here are the items that we are seeking to best serve our neighbors:

• Deodorant
• Diapers (sizes 4, 5, & 6)
• Shampoo
• Toilet Paper
• Toothpaste

Your volunteer service makes a big difference, and it also helps spread the word to the community about the work we do to help our neighbors. Thank you.

GATECITY IPA WINS GOLD

During Seattle Beer Week, Hellbent Brewing Company crafted the GateCity IPA to benefit North Helpline and helped us raise funds. For every pint sold, participating businesses donated $1 to help make sure your neighbors have food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Over the next few months, several of our staff and AmeriCorps positions are transitioning. If you know of someone who would like to join our team as staff or AmeriCorps, please send them our way! Be on the lookout for some new faces around North Helpline and help our new folks feel welcome.

Thank you for your continued support making sure your neighbors have food on their tables and a roof over their heads.

KELLY’S KORNER

Greens from giving gardens, mushrooms from the farmers market, and an abundance of stone fruit are sure signs that it is summer at North Helpline. While we have great produce available right now, that is not always the case during the other seasons throughout the rest of the year. This is why our food purchasing budget is so important. It is vital that our neighbors have nutritious food to fill their bellies every day, not just these warm summer ones. In addition to produce, we strive to consistently provide nutritious foods including meat, eggs, and milk. Please make a donation today to fuel our community with healthy food.

If you missed it, we are still happy to show you the space! Call (206) 367-3477 and ask for Ben. Second, North Helpline hosted a community conversation and viewing of the documentary “A Place at the Table,” examining hunger in America. After watching the documentary, we had a conversation about the importance of food banks and food subsidies.

Bob, a longtime volunteer, talked about reducing stigma and being aware of the diverse types of people who come to the food bank. “Some folks don’t realize that it’s not just people experiencing homelessness who come to food banks. A lot of our neighbors are working but just can’t seem to make ends meet. They have to be able to get the food in order to pay for their utilities and rent and keep the family going.”

One of our clients said she was concerned about government programs.

STAY IN TOUCH

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BITTER LAKE CONT’D

“If we’re going up, we’ll be seeing more people going through food bank lines. I’m worried about programs going away and being cut.”

A final note: our Bitter Lake food bank manager Casey is moving with his family to Alabama. We will miss him! Casey is pictured below with councilwoman Deborah Juarez, who helped secure funds for the Bitter Lake food bank.

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